

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 - 12. (cancelled)

13. (currently amended) A system for remotely and automatically controlling, by a facilities management company, maintenance of facilities by a maintenance company with regards to ~~the~~ a contract binding the maintenance company to the facilities management company, said system comprising:

local monitoring units, each local monitoring unit being installed in close proximity to at least one piece of said facilities and associated thereto, each local monitoring unit comprising:

means for measuring operation parameters of the associated piece of facilities for detecting an operational state thereof;

control means for allowing a maintenance technician to real time notify the start and the end time of his maintenance or repair task performed on the associated piece of facilities or to notify that the associated piece of facilities is out of order for a long period because works are in progress, said control means being independent from the operational state of the associated piece of facilities,

means for being connected to a transmission network, and

means for transmitting through said transmission network said detected operational state of said associated piece of facilities and said maintenance task start and end times;

a first and a second computer, each computer being connected to the local monitoring units through said

transmission network and comprising means for receiving and processing said detected operational state and said maintenance task start and end times transmitted by the local monitoring units, and

means for storing all information transmitted by the local monitoring units, said first computer being available to the maintenance company and ~~is~~ being used to manage the maintenance of said facilities, and said second computer being available to the facilities management company and ~~is~~ being used to automatically control the maintenance and repair tasks performed by the technicians of said maintenance company on said facilities with regards to their contractual obligations.

14. (cancelled)

15. (previously presented) The system according to claim 13, wherein each of said local monitoring units comprises means for preventing the local monitoring unit from transmitting through said transmission network information relating to the detected operational state of the associated piece of facilities between said start and end times of said maintenance, repair or works task signaled using said control means.

16. (previously presented) The system according to claim 13, wherein each of said first and second computers is connected to a data base collecting all information relating to the facilities and the maintenance thereof, and the information transmitted by said local monitoring units.

17. (previously presented) The system according to claim 13, wherein the first and second computers comprise:

means for counting a number of maintenance tasks carried out for each piece of said facilities during a first period of time, for comparing said maintenance task number to a first threshold, and for displaying a first maintenance fault signal if the maintenance task number does not reach said first threshold at the end of said first period of time;

means for computing a total duration of the maintenance tasks performed on each piece of said facilities during a second period of time, for comparing said total duration to a second threshold, and for displaying a second maintenance fault signal if said total duration is not at least equal to said second threshold at the end of said second period of time;

means for computing an elapsed time between a time when a piece of said facilities is detected as malfunctioning and the start time of a repair task on said piece of facilities, for comparing said elapsed time with a third threshold, and for displaying a third maintenance fault signal when said elapsed time exceeds said third threshold; and

means for comparing a restart time to put a piece of said facilities to a normal operational state after the start time of a repair task on said piece of facilities with a fourth threshold, and for displaying a fourth maintenance fault signal when said restart time exceeds said fourth threshold.

18. (previously presented) The system according to claim 17, wherein the second computer comprises means for computing penalties to be applied to the maintenance company if a maintenance fault concerning the exceeding of one of the four said thresholds have been detected by said second computer.

19. (previously presented) The system according to claim 17,

wherein the first and second thresholds are set as a function of said facilities, and wherein the third and fourth thresholds are defined as a function of the detected malfunction or type of repair, said thresholds being as defined by a maintenance contract binding the maintenance company to the managing company.

20. (previously presented) The system according to claim 13, wherein transmissions between the local monitoring units and the first and second computers are carried out through a basic wire or radio telephone network and wherein the local monitoring units further comprise means for setting-up a link between the local monitoring units and the first and second computers through a radio telephone network, when the local monitoring units cannot access a basic telephone network.

21. (previously presented) The system according to claim 20, wherein at least one local monitoring unit of a group of said local monitoring units which are installed close from one another comprises a data transmission unit, wherein said data transmission unit comprises means for transmission over the basic telephone network and means for transmission over the radio telephone network, and wherein other local monitoring units of the site comprising means for connection to said data transmission unit.

22. (previously presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein the radio telephone network transmission means in the data transmission unit are provided with a backed-up power supply for sending a power supply fault message when the local monitoring unit is no longer powered.

23. (previously presented) The system according to claim 13, wherein each of said local monitoring units comprises means for detecting internal faults pertaining to operation of said local monitoring unit, and means for sending malfunction information to a third computer if such internal faults are detected, said third computer being connected to the local monitoring units through said transmission network and comprising means for receiving and processing and storing into a database the internal malfunction information transmitted by the local monitoring units.

24. (currently amended) The system according to claim 13, wherein each of said local monitoring units comprises:

- means for starting a first timer after a malfunction has been detected on the associated piece of facilities;

- means for starting a second timer if the first timer has timed out without the corresponding fault having disappeared;

- means for sending a malfunction message to the first and second computers if the second timer has timed out without the corresponding fault having disappeared;

- means for starting a third timer after a fault has disappeared; and

- means for transmitting a fault disappearance message if the third timer has timed out without the corresponding fault reoccurring.

25. (previously presented) The system according to claim 24, wherein a respective duration for each of the first, second and third timers is determined independently from each other as a function of each malfunction type.